



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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Tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*)

Revision 10/28/02

**Missouri Dept of Health and Senior Services (800) 392-0272 (24 hours)
State Public Health Laboratory (573) 751-3334 or 751-0633**

Remember that these samples may be highly infective! Extreme caution should be taken in collecting, preparing for shipment and transporting any material suspected of being contaminated with a biological agent.

Specimen collection and transport

Clinical:

Tissue samples from humans (or animals) must be submitted frozen (-30 to -70°C.) Best samples for testing include liver, spleen, lungs or lymph node. If pneumonic tularemia is suspected, collect a sputum or bronchial/tracheal wash. They can be placed into any sterile container that seals well. Blood can also be cultured, but is seldom positive.

Reference cultures:

The MSPHL can also confirm or identify any organism isolated from another laboratory, which is suspected of being *F. tularensis*. Reference cultures should be submitted on an enriched chocolate slant.

Environmental samples:

At this time environmental sampling, if performed, would be situation specific. No standardized testing procedures are available. Consult the MSPHL.

Reporting:

All reporting times are the minimum time. Any individual specimen could take longer.

F. tularensis is a very slow-growing organism. Primary isolation from a clinical specimen may take 3-5 days. The MSPHL can perform an FA and PCR directly on tissue specimens. This could be completed within 2-3 hours after receipt of the specimen in the lab. Confirmation of a suspect organism isolated at another laboratory by direct FA and PCR can be completed within 1-2 hours of receipt in the MSPHL.